

INFORMATION REPORT  
**SECRET**

COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Soviet Military and Political Objectives in the Mediterranean

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1. In March 1948, the Soviet General Staff, in a meeting attended by Molotov and other directors of Soviet foreign policy, examined anew certain aspects of Soviet political and naval policy in the Mediterranean. The General Staff enumerated the reasons why it was becoming increasingly necessary to acquire bases in the Mediterranean at any cost and launched an "annual plan" for the realization of this objective. At this date, the Kremlin was already aware of the Yugoslav crisis and the possibility of Tito's defection. The points examined were as follows:
  - a. Yugoslavia: To make every effort -- political, diplomatic, and revolutionary -- to prevent Yugoslavia and its ports, especially Kotor and Fiume, from escaping from the Soviet orbit. In case of extreme necessity, to endeavor to liberate Kotor from the "Trotskyite" Belgrade Government, favoring movements in Montenegro to achieve an autonomous Montenegrin republic as a means of controlling Kotor. This action should be synchronized with an analogous development in Macedonia.
  - b. Albania: At any cost, to prevent Albania from reaching an accord with Yugoslavia and leaving the Soviet sphere of action. The Albanian naval and air bases, while deficient and modest in comparison with those of Yugoslavia, will be the sole strategic points for controlling the central Mediterranean.
  - c. Italy: To direct the elections in Italy by obtaining Communist control of the peninsula.
  - d. Italian colonies: To favor the return to Italy of the former Italian colonies in Africa (such as Libya) in order to prevent the establishment of an Allied military foothold and in order to have the opportunity to control them in case of a Communist advent in Italy.

CLASSIFICATION

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- e. Palestine: To watch the Palestine situation and to favor local crises in order to have an opportunity to split the Arab system and to profit from the possibility of an official (United Nations) installation of Soviet forces. Secondly, to create bonds with the government of the State of Israel and to favor Communist and pro-Soviet groups (Hebrew Communist Party, Stern Gang, Syndicalists).
- f. Lebanon: To intensify Communist propaganda in Lebanon in order to establish in that Arab state, which alone is susceptible of being Communized (through the large Christian element), a pro-Soviet Communist government which would permit the control of Mediterranean ports.
- g. Greece: To increase action in Greece, either by aiding Markos or by intensifying Communist action in the interior.
- h. Turkey: To intensify Communist penetration of Turkey and the neighboring areas (Armenia, Kurdistan).
- i. Egypt: To increase the political and xenophobic crisis in Egypt.
- 2. At the end of August 1948, the situation in regard to the points examined in March was the subject of a new examination. The source of information concerning this meeting is a person in Bulgaria whose background is political rather than military and who is reported to belong to circles close to Dimitrov. The following outline of Soviet policy is based on his deductions and opinion but it follows Paragraph 1, above, sufficiently closely to have a semblance of accuracy:
  - a. Yugoslavia: To seek to eliminate Tito. Secondly, to stir up the Yugoslav people against the Belgrade Government, either by Cominform propaganda or by aiding dissident movements or by inciting the minority. Then action in Macedonia to take Macedonia away from Belgrade, setting up an autonomous republic allied to Sofia. Action in Montenegro, with the object of gaining control of Kotor. Aid also to the anti-Communist nationalist movements in Yugoslavia (Chetniks, Kruzaki, etc.) in order to weaken Tito. Inciting of the non-Serbian minorities (Albanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Italian); arousing of the dissident movements in Montenegro, Dalmatia, Venezia Giulia, Macedonia, Kosovo-Metolija, Banat. Economic sanctions against Belgrade. Finally, creation of a localized conflict (with Albania or Bulgaria) in order to be able to intervene lawfully against "Tito the Aggressor", even with the aid of the United Nations.
  - b. Albania: To intensify the control of and to increase the military potential of Albania, indispensable for its naval and air bases against the West and as a land base for Markos. To use Albania as a point of friction with Belgrade (Montenegro, Kosovo-Metolija, Macedonia).
  - c. Macedonia: To insist on this sector in order to obtain a corridor between Albania and Bulgaria, Cominform control of the Vardar Valley, and a border with Greece.
  - d. Italy: To intensify political action in Italy, changing the systems and methods. To increase military control in Italy, which remains the prime and only efficient base for the Anglo-Americans in the Mediterranean.
  - e. Italian colonies: To impede in diplomatic circles any solution of the Italian colony problem which would permit establishment of Anglo-American bases, either by opposing an integral, autonomist, and xenophobic solution or by action in the United Nations.
  - f. Palestine, on the Jewish side: Not at any cost to permit the situation in Palestine to be resolved perfectly. To compel Israel to lean on the USSR in international circles. To favor anti-Semitism in the world. To convince the government of Tel Aviv that only Moscow can aid it. To create crises between Israel and the United States. To increase Jewish Communist activity.

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6. Palestine, on the Arab side: To use the Palestine crisis to discredit the policy of the Arab League and of Arab nationalism allied to London, and to aim at the refugees and the proletarian mass (Syria, Egypt, Lebanon) in order to spread the idea that only Communism and Soviet Russia are able to aid the Arab people.

h. Greece: To reconstruct the Markos army in Albania and not to neglect subversive Communist action in Greece, such as in the Greek islands of the eastern Mediterranean.

3. It is evident that, while some western circles maintain that the future Soviet force, political and military, should concentrate on two objectives -- Germany and the Far East -- the USSR regards the Mediterranean as the crucial point in the western situation. Also, in the field of naval strategy, Soviet orientation shows that the northern seas (Baltic and North Sea) are considered from only the defensive point of view and that the effort of Moscow is aimed at overcoming the Dardanelles, passing into the Mediterranean at whatever cost (Albania and Greece directly; Palestine and Lebanon indirectly), and neutralizing possible Anglo-American bases (Italian colonies, Italy, Greece, Egypt).

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